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Subject: Sowing and Reaping.

## PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

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OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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## SOWING AND REAPING.

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"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."—Rom. ii., 6-11.

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It was the habit of the Hebrew mind to regard God as the immediate cause of all the phenomena of nature. The winds were his breath. The lightning was the flash of his eye. The thunder was his voice, or his footstep. The clouds were his cushioned throne. His "voice" made the "hinds to calve." He caused the grass to grow. He rolled the rivers in their channels. Men had not learned that, though this was true, it was true only mediately, and that the divine power was to be, not the less, but rather the more, wonderful when it should be found out that it was exercised through secondary instruments—*laws*, as we now term them. And as the visible and observable phenomena of life were supposed to be the subjects of the immediate volition of God, so much more was this supposed to be the case with those phenomena that were a little mysterious and occult.

Then there was no knowledge of the human mind. When a man had radiant thoughts, no person in the Hebrew nation ever would have said that there was a wholesome condition of the brain; that there was pure and vitalizing blood; and that this was the strongest indication of the very highest state of health. Rather, it was thought to be the motion of God in and on the man.

You will discern, throughout the Old Testament, that, in



so far as man was supposed to have a mind separate from the inspirations of God, that mind was supposed to reside wherever anything was felt; and that idea is not worn out, and probably never will be laid aside. We still speak of the heart as connected with the affections, because the affections increase the beating of the heart. We know that the brain exerts an influence throughout the whole nervous system, and quickens the circulation; but still we shall never get over using the expression that the heart increases the circulation, though the heart has nothing to do with it—especially as a residence and a cause. Violent pride had wrought its effects; and we find the old Hebrews supposing the passions to reside in the bowels, or in the reins or kidneys; so rude and ignorant were they of the first elements of psychology and physiology.

We are not, therefore, to look in the Scriptures of the Old Testament or of the New, for the particular phraseology which belongs to a later, a modern period, and which has assumed a scientific form. And yet the principles which we now express scientifically were just as plainly expressed by the Hebrews as by us, though with a peculiar phraseology which belonged to their time and age.

When, therefore, it was said, "God is no respecter of persons," it belonged to a system of speaking which said, "God administers by universal and invariable laws." It was said, "God is just, and therefore he treats all men alike"—that is, upon the principle of justice. That is the equivalent to our saying that "God, in administering by natural laws, administers a universal government,—one which falls alike upon all, in accordance with natural laws."

The substance is more unphilosophically stated in this passage—the whole of it:

"God will render to every man according to his deeds [what is that but a declaration of the great law of cause and effect? What is it but a declaration of the existence of that same constitution which we philosophically call the constitution of law, and the invariable consequence of law,—like cause producing like results, always and everywhere?]: to them who by patient continuance in well doing [to those who obey the great moral laws in the circle in which they move; who do it not by littles; who do it not occasionally; who do it not feebly], seek [what? Momentary sensation? No, character

and destiny] glory, honor, and immortality [to those who, regarding the substance of their whole manhood, and of their whole life, as including both worlds, looking on themselves as heritors of immortality, seek to do well], eternal life. [He will do it, no matter who they are. He will do it to the Greek as well as to the Jew. God had a covenant with his peculiar people; but it was not a covenant that excluded anybody else who lived right.] But unto them that are contentious [those who are combative, destructive, animal], and do not obey the truth [that is, who do not observe the great laws under which they live—for the laws of God are in the nature of fundamental truths], but obey unrighteousness [violate the great instincts, the great facts, the great boundary lines of rectitude], indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first [as having the most light, and as being therefore the most culpable], and also of the Gentile [as being under the same great scheme of laws, and therefore not able to escape]; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile [or Greek; the original is *Greek* though it is translated *Gentile*]; for there is no respect of persons with God."

To the Hindoos, who live according to the great laws of morality and religion as they are revealed in nature, God will render his reward. Here is an explicit declaration from the inspired apostle that God will, first to the Jews, as the most intelligent and advanced, render the remuneration of right living, and the reprobation and penalty of wrong living; but if the Gentiles, who have no revelation, and no Christ, and no clear sense of God, like the Centurion and Cornelius, yet have reverence and seek righteousness, then God will render to them the same remuneration as to the Jews; for God is no sectarian, and he does not shut himself up to any one church. So that this is, when translated into our modern habit of thought, a general declaration that we are living under a moral government in which cause and effect work just as they do in the other relations of life.

Now, men, in our time at least, have come to believe that in regard to the lower or physical world there is such a thing as immutable cause and invariable effect, and that no man can hope to have either life, or health, or strength, or skill, or success, who has not an ordinary knowledge of what the laws of cause and effect are, and who does not yield a reasonable degree of obedience to those laws. We understand perfectly well that the enjoyment of bodily life depends upon

the observance of natural laws ; and we never expect, therefore, that a man who transgresses the great laws of rest can be a healthy man. It is familiarly said, in the popular phraseology, " You cannot play owl and hawk both. Work all day and watch all night, will kill anybody." It may seem a very simple illustration ; nevertheless, there is no man who does not know that the condition of his health is that he shall have sleep in its time, food in its time, rest in its time, recreation in its time, and warmth in its place. Men do not consider it a thing problematical at all ; for, although in different constitutions the effects of natural law are relative,—so that a very strong constitution can bear more than one that is not strong, so that one person can expose himself more than another, the penalty therefore differing in degree and varying in amount, according to the strength and vigor that belongs to one and another,—yet the truth is universally recognized that health depends upon a reasonable observance of hygienic laws—laws of the physical world in which we are placed, and on which our exertions depend.

Well, we have learned more than that. Men have come to believe, with equal certainty, that there is a connection between cause and effect in what is called " getting on " in this world. By " getting on " we mean so far subduing the great natural laws of the world to our uses as to raise up round about us the physical means of existence and enjoyment. This includes the great industrial kingdom. Haply our life comes in the temperate zone where nature supplies those who solicit, but not those who are indolent. One of the earliest lessons that we receive is the lesson of industry ; because everybody believes that there is a great law on that subject. " Nothing venture, nothing have." " He that will not work shall not eat," Paul said ; but the climate said it before Paul did. Nature says it—" He that will not work, shall not eat." It is not meant exactly so, because there are " gentlemen " who do not work, and do eat. By a *gentleman*, I mean a man who does not do anything. The American idea of a gentleman is, very nearly, a man who has been left with property, and who therefore does not need to do anything except to dress well, and to behave pretty well, and to move



around in life easily, not soiling his hands, not distempering his body, contributing nothing, keeping within proper bounds, and on the whole being a very nice, respectable, excellent man. But he will not work, and he shall not eat. Well, he is eating the fruit of somebody else's work; because there is a vicarious element in all life. A child may eat on account of his parents' industry as well as his own. Yet the law stands, comprehensively, and men believe in it, that he who is going to prosper must work. We teach our children so from the beginning; and those children who are fortunate enough to be born poor learn this as one of the fundamental laws of prosperity—that one must exert himself if he expects to be happy in this life. We point to the vagabond, to the broken down fragments, to the potsherd and remnants, in our institutions, and say to our children, "That is what you will come to, if you do not work."

So that industry is one of the great natural laws. Men say of activity, "That is a law which you must obey, or you never will be anything." We all understand that there is a great distinction, not in the conventional ideas of things, but in the law of things, between carelessness and carefulness; between foresight and heedlessness; between frugality and wastefulness. Men must consider others. If they are going to succeed industriously in this life, they must work with others. Coöperation is the basis of such success; and, to a certain extent, selfishness makes every man benevolent. If he looks only upon his own things, if he is greedy, if he is sly and crafty and dishonest, so that all who come near him feel that he has absorbed something from them, it will turn men away from him and leave him solitary. He knows this; and therefore he understands that it is wise for him, if he would succeed in life, to coöperate with others. So men come to learn that order, diligence, intelligence and perseverance are great laws which are ordained, not by society, but by God; that they belong to the course of nature; and that those who faithfully observe them will succeed—will succeed, that is, in that sphere to which these laws apply.

It does not follow that because a man is industrious, and therefore creates a good deal; that because he is frugal, and

therefore saves a good deal, and wastes nothing ; that because he is orderly, and therefore connects the present with the future, and continually accumulates—it does not follow from these reasons that he will reap anything more than he can reap in that sphere to which those laws belong which he is observing. Of this I shall have occasion to speak again.

In regard to society, there is also a theory for that. Though there are a great many things in society that men consider to be conventional—as they are ; yet there are certain great elements which everybody regards as indispensable to success in society. We say that every man is free, but that no man's freedom is to be allowed to interfere with the like freedom of another. What is the result of it ? For the sake of the advantage which comes from living together, men say, “ I will give up a little, I will retrench, I will hold in, I will forbear ;” and if you forbear, hold in, retrench, and give up a little, and everybody else does the same thing, society will grow and prosper. This is agreed to by all. But it was never put to vote. You might as well say that marbles in a tumbler vote to occupy but so much room, and to touch each other only at such points. It is a part of the necessity of things ; it belongs to that nature which God gave to men in society—namely, that among men living together there should be certain great society laws, social laws ; and that if men observe them they thread their way through society, reaping its benefits, while, if they disobey them, they reap hindrances, frowns, penalties on every side. Thus society laws come up.

Now, the laws of society seem to be conventional ; but where men, living together and carrying on any branch of industry, have come to find out that they cannot succeed unless such and such courses are invariably pursued, a law springs up which was first enacted by God, or else there would not have been that necessity. The development of that law is not the creation of it, but only the discovery of it ; for the laws which are imposed by one on another, and which enforce temperance, and peace, and respect for property and character, and great social duties, are not created by men. They find them out by living without them, and



feeling the inconvenience, and work their way into them little by little; and they construct a principle, and give it the form of enactment; but that enactment, though passed by a legislature, and though discovered by human intelligence, was divinely discovered, and was a divine enactment long before. Those laws which govern the existence of society are as much natural laws as the law of gravity, the law of electricity, the law of light, or the law of the motion of fluids.

Men have come to recognize this; and therefore we say, "That man was foolish. He might have known that such a course would have led to such results. He might have known that he could not pursue such a course in a business community and succeed. He has got what he deserves. He was a fool, and he brought it on his own head." These things are common. Men recognize that, in regard to their physical self, their social self, and their society self, there are certain courses or laws which, if they obey, benefit them, but which, if they disobey, hurt them.

Now, the question is, Does this organization of life upon certain definite laws, so that there are causes and effects that are constant, and that may be found out and calculated upon,—does this extend beyond the physical realm into moral elements? Is a man's moral conduct, is right and wrong, in the largest sense of that term, under just this same constitution? Men have supposed that God governed the physical world by immutable laws, and that to a certain extent, as society was made up of physical elements, these laws extended into society; but that as you rose higher, where faith, and conscience, and hope, and benevolence, and devotion, and obedience to God have their sway, God became a direct personal Administrator, and that here there were no such great causes and effects. It has been thought that a man might disobey all the great canons of right, and not run against the inevitable effects of such violated causes. It has been thought that men might live lives of sin and iniquity, and, by a lucky dodge, just at the end of life, whisk into heaven, and be as well off as though they had, on earth, been virtuous and good. Men have supposed that there was some

exorcising power in repentance, or some pardoning power of the priestly-organized Church, or some power revealed in the Gospel, by which men who had lived all their lives long in the violation of moral laws might be as well off at the end as though they had not violated them. They have supposed that a man who had during his whole life been cheating his neighbors might, at the point of death, like the thief on the cross, say, "Let me in," and be let into heaven, and be about as good as the others that were there. It has been supposed that a man who had been all his life pouring out hideous passions on men, and destroying them, might, at the last moment, when sickness had lowered the tone of his blood, and when he had repented, step off and in, and fare as well as though he had been a virtuous saint—a pure about virgin. Men have an impression that, in regard to all these great laws which touch character and disposition, there is a different administration.

Now, I hold that there is no part of a man that is not under the administration of divine, and therefore of natural, law. The conduct of the reason, the conduct of the taste, the conduct of the moral sentiments—of right and wrong in their most ineffable forms—are subject to the same administration. These elements are all part and parcel of that great organized system of law which is the right hand of Jehovah. He administers high and low, and everywhere; and, under his administration, obedience to law carries remuneration on the one side, and violation of law carries penalty on the other side; and no repentance, no supposable change, no compensation, will ever prevent any man from reaping what he sows. It will make a great difference whether or not a man repents at the last hour, in respect to the beginning of his career in the other world,—that is to say, he may by repentance, if it be genuine and comprehensive, secure the opportunity for a start in the other world; but the man who lives here on a low plane, dying, even though he goes through the gate of repentance into the future life, begins just as low there as he ended here. The difference between him and those who are good and noble will be just as great there as it is here, and will be apparently greater, because

the clear discernment of the moral faculties will disclose his condition as it never was disclosed here. It will make all the difference in the world how a man lives, in regard to these things.

But in the larger realm of the moral faculties, which constitute the higher nature, men are skeptical about the prevalence of law. They do not believe that a man's prosperity is dependent upon cause and effect in moral elements as in physical elements. They think if a man puts all his power into his business, and is continuous therein, though he may be very selfish, very proud, very passionate, very corrupt, it will not make much difference. They think that if he attends faithfully to his business that is all that is necessary.

Now, the complexity of man is such that we are obliged to admit that men are often reaping the fruit that belongs to one department of life, without reaping anything above that. A man may be in the enjoyment of perfect health, and yet be corrupt in moral elements; and we may say in respect to such men, as Christ said in respect to the Pharisees, who made long prayers on the street-corners: "Verily, they have their reward"—such as it is. They get what they seek—human praise; but that is all they do get, and they get it with its accompanying deprivations and losses. A man may be as proud as Lucifer, and yet, if he observes the laws of physical health, he will get his reward—that is physical health. He will not get anything higher than that, but he will get that.

If a man aims to be happy simply by receiving the social kindness or good-will of his fellows, he does not ask intellectual appreciation, nor does he ask to move in the sphere of ambition. It is sufficient for him in the lower relations of social life, where he finds himself to have the appreciation of his neighbors. He may be perfectly kind; he may be, to those who know him only in those relations, genial and good,—and he will reap his reward accordingly.

Aaron Burr was to his servants and those about him personally very genial, very gentlemanly, very considerate; and yet, that was not where he sought reward. He got it there, by reason of this personal quality, but all above that was



vitiated by the essentially corrupt moral tendency of his whole nature. I doubt not that Benedict Arnold was, in regard to many social qualities, very much esteemed ; but, in his higher and nobler relations, he was not.

A man may be without any Christian quality, and yet be a healthy man ; a man may be without any eminent moral traits, and yet be a kindly man in his neighborhood ; but no man can have the whole of himself, no man's nature can be lifted above the animal and social to that which constitutes essential manhood in civilization, and to the play of those faculties which make him divine, unless he obeys the laws of all the spheres through which his life passes, and to which he belongs. Down low in a man is the animal ; but it is not enough that he regards only animal laws. Next higher is the social ; but it is not enough that he regards simply the social and the animal. Still higher is the intellect ; but it is not enough that he regards merely the intellectual, the social and the animal. Then there is the ethical ; but it is not enough that he regards the ethical, the intellectual, the social and the animal. It is not enough that a man regards the great secular laws under which he is placed. Higher than these is the moral nature, the true manhood—the noblest efflorescence of human life. The highest experiences, the choicest specimens, the richest and ripest fruits, must be secured, as well as these lower blessings.

There are some trees whose very roots taste good,—as the sassafras. There are other trees whose bark and leaves and roots taste bitter, but whose fruit is good, as the apple, the pear, and the cherry. Now, a man is bitter of root, he is insipid of bark, and the pleasant fruit of his life comes in the last developments—in the final stages. The distinctively religious elements, the sentient parts, wherein happiness chiefly lies, are the latest results of right living.

So then, if men think that in this life happiness or unhappiness is dependent upon external circumstances, and not upon internal character, they deceive themselves ; and yet, that is a mistake which is constantly being made. Men wish to be happy, and they perceive that the reason why a great many men are unhappy is the want of property. They have

not enough to keep the wolf from the door. Though they have character and insight, they are obliged to submit to many servile, painful courses of conduct in their relations with those who are arrogant above them. So, from an instinct that is not ignoble at all, every man says, "Let me be independent. Let me not be anybody's slave. Let me not be obliged to spend all my time in feeding my mouth. Give me leisure and opportunity for manhood." And he goes to work to gain property. But just as soon as a man begins to work for property, it becomes a game. Where society is organized as it is with us, business is sharp and competitive; and, aside from the ambition to acquire property, comes also the feeling of rivalry; and each man measures himself with other men about him; and men are perpetually striving against each other. And under the stimulus of this element of competition, life being regarded as a game, nobody supposes that he is any less happy because he misstates his intentions,—as, in a game of chess, letting his opponent think that he is bearing down with all his forces on certain men, while in fact he is seeking to checkmate him on another part of the board. As, in a game of chess, nobody thinks any harm is done by the exercise of craft in that way, so men think crafty devices in business are all right. And they say, "Well, to be sure, I put him off his guard; I turned the switch when he did not know it; and he thought so and so: I did it; I did it." Men rejoice in their smartness, and tell of their little tricks and strifes, of their crafts and conflicts, indulged in with each other. They come into life and deal with their fellow-men as if they were mere pawns, chessmen on a board, and as if it made no difference to them, so that they got on; so that they were fed; so that they all the time got a little more, and a little more, and a little more. They receive admiration and praise. They are young and healthy. The excitement goes on, perhaps, until they are fifty years of age. They have become very rich. It dawns on them at last that the time has come for them to enjoy their wealth. They do not want to heap up property endlessly. Then comes the question of happiness. You have got rich; you have gained what you sought: why are you

not happy? You have succeeded in life, in one sense; your circumstances are all propitious; but are the men who have favorable circumstances about them in life the men that are really happy? Take your own observation about this. You can count up the men in your neighborhood that have succeeded without the development of the moral elements that are in them; and do you find that they are singing men? Are they usually joyful? They have their reward, such as it is. What have they done? They have complied with the great laws of industrial life, and they have achieved industrial success. They have got that, and they have got it by obeying those laws. But now they want something besides that. Having been obedient to industrial laws, and having been disobedient to social laws, they want social laws to give them something.

A man has violated the social laws, and he has a bad name. People say of him, "Why, he is the man who turned that widow out: she was a tenant of his. It was just; oh, yes, it was just; but it was inhuman." "This is the man who, when he was guardian of his brother's children, was so blessed by Providence that when they came of age they got nothing. He was an honest man, to be sure; you could find nothing wrong on his books; everything looked right; only they got nothing, and he became richer and richer." "This is the man who, when there was a bankruptcy, happened to know it first; and here were his confidential friends, they had been endorsing one another's paper, and working in one another's interest,—and he shot away, and rushed to the spot, and scooped in all the assets. He came back, apparently innocent, and ignorant of what had happened; but they found it out very quick. He sacrificed their interests to his own, grabbed everything, and left them in the lurch."

You may not be able, exactly, by a law of society, to bring that man to judgment; but that is not the question. He was not acting in an industrial and commercial sphere; he was acting in the social sphere. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," says the commandment. "I won't," says the man. Well, then don't; but if you violate social law you must take the penalty—and penalties do not always



come immediately. They hold over ; they accumulate ; they wait. There is nothing so patient as violated laws, waiting for penalties to be sent by and by.

Here was a man who was so strong in obedience to industrial and physical law that everybody stood out of his way and admired him, and everybody saw that, as far as he went, he got his reward. By and by, the time came when he wanted respect and consideration ; but the boys in the street hooted after him ; and, though the neighbors treated him, perhaps, with an assumed kindness, he was made to feel that of all who were around him there was not one—that there was not a day-laborer nor a poor seamstress—who could not command more disinterested affection than he : and he felt it, and he said, “I believe in total depravity. Men are brutes, and have no sense ; they act in cliques, and are proud and ugly.” That is to say, when there is a thorn-hedge along the border of a precipice, and a man runs into it and he gets scratched, he curses thorns and says they are nuisances in creation. This man has violated social law ; but because he has kept the commercial law, the industrial law, and the physical law, he claims the fruits of obedience to social laws which he has never obeyed. During all the commerce of twenty-five or thirty or forty years in which the man has been laboring, he has rendered no obedience to moral laws, in the higher sense of the term. He has been without God and without religious hope in the world. He has had a certain toleration for men—that is, he has let them go, indifferently. Nobody is so intolerant as a man who does not care a snap about anything. A man who does not believe in religion, does not care whether you are a Baptist, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Roman Catholic, or anything else. He tolerates you. In other words, he does not care—that is all. There are men living in this world who leave religion to other people ; but when it comes in their way, woe be to it. Such a man, when there are great elements of success that he wants to secure, and his way lies right across the great law of justice, says, “Justice ! Do you suppose I am going to lose a fortune of five hundred thousand dollars for the sake of a mere whim-

sical idea of justice ? I know my own interest, and I am not going to stand in my own light." Many a man will sacrifice the law of humanity, not once or twice, but many times, if he can bottom his prosperity on its violation. There are some who rake up their money by courses which wring tears and blood from men, and destroy them ; they know it ; and when you charge it upon them, they say, "Sentimentalism ! sentimentalism ! Business is business—business is business. I have got rich ; and do you suppose that God would have let me get rich, if I had been doing anything that he cared about ?"

This one gets to be a hoary old man ; he is worth twenty millions of dollars ; and, if you listen to him at midnight, it will be as it was with an eminent financier whom I knew, but who has gone now—I do not know where—and who was heard in the night, tossing in his bed, to say, "Oh God ! I wonder when it will be morning." He could have commanded, the next day, ten millions of dollars ; but he was a poor, miserable wreck of humanity, whose clutching hands had become thin like a hawk's, who still had a sense of money, who yet was sagacious, and was looked up to and counseled with in the directory. He was an efficient man, and was called one of our "princes" ; but he was a miserable wretch, notwithstanding. He loved nobody, and nobody loved him. He bought all the kindness he received. He knew there were harpy heirs who cursed God that he lived so long. He knew that he must leave his money. The Lord had put the desert of Sahara in his heart—sand, sand ; and not a whit less sand because it was gold sand. A young man says, "You tell me that a man cannot prosper in this world unless he obeys the great laws of God : now look at that man ! He died worth twenty millions of dollars ; and he probably has not darkened the door of a church for the last twenty years. The only time he is known to have gone into a church, he went in feet first ; and yet, see how he prospered. Look at his success."

Well, that man succeeded in just the part of himself where he did obey natural laws ; and in that part where he violated them, he suffered. He suffered for the want of that

element of manhood without which we are lean as sharks. In that part where the heart lies, and that joins a man to his fellows; in that part where affection unites with affection, and makes that undertone of joy, that anthem of life, which flows through all virtuous society—there he stepped out, broke the string, and his harp was tuneless. In that direction, he had no life. He did not miss it in the activity of business; but it was lost, nevertheless. He did not miss it until he came to make up the inventory of his life; and, even then, he did not know what was wanting. Then he felt the lack. “Other men,” he said, “are happy; why not I? Other men enjoy themselves; why not I?” Because happiness, joy, was the price you paid for money. You coined your affections, and gave them for gold,—and gold you have got. You should have planted them in heaven, that they might sprout there; but, instead of that, you plucked them up by the root. You have been so afraid of generosity that you have grown avaricious. You have been so afraid of wasting benevolence that you have severed every tie that connects you with your fellows. You have succeeded in the lower departments of life, and you are admired as a rich man; but nobody admires you as a *man*. You stand without friends and without friendship. What summer is without birds, without flowers, without fragrance, and without the dews of night, that is a man without good will and the cordial sympathies and affections of his fellow men; and the poorest man that walks the streets of New York or Brooklyn on whom everybody smiles, and to whom little children run and hold up their little hands and sweet faces, is richer than the man who is weighed down with gold, but whom everybody scorns, and whom people point at, saying, “Old hunks! old hunks!”

There are many young men who, from want of experience, from want of reflection, from want of proper instruction, suppose that a man has succeeded simply because he has gained the things which he sought in the lower department of physical and industrial laws, though in the realm of social and intellectual and moral elements he has comparatively failed, and life has become a desert to him.



Let me say, still further, here, that we misjudge the potency, the universality, and the inevitableness of this administration of law in the great kingdom of morality, if we suppose that men who succeed in life succeed by the things in which they are corrupt. Why, certainly, when a man breaks into my house and steals four or five suits of clothes, as well as what little silver he can lay his hands upon (I have not much), and many little conveniences, and carries them to the pawnbroker's, and pockets the money, and is worth two or three hundred dollars more than he was, he succeeds—undoubtedly he succeeds; and if that were the whole of his life, stealing would be successful: but, in judging of the success of this thief, you must take into account what is the average enjoyment and prosperity of thieves. Do thieves prosper, so that men can be accounted men when they become thieves, because they are prosperous? They do prosper in a certain way; but still, stealing is a bad trade. Every man who is a thief will bear witness, at last, that stealing is a hard master. Generally speaking, men that steal have a certain malformation. They are organically misformed. The defect can be overruled and restrained; but, if it is allowed to go without restraint, it will lead a man to mischief. And it is not a sufficient excuse for a man who goes wrong to say that he was born with a propensity in that direction. When a man is physically deformed, he is not satisfied to remain so, if he can help it. If a man is born with a club-foot, he is not proud of it, and he does not say, "I am going to make the most of my club-foot." On the other hand, he goes to the surgeon, and says, "Can't you cut the cords on one side, and twist it around and make it like the other?" If a man is cross-eyed, he does not glory in it; it is a cause of sorrow to him; and he asks if an operation for strabismus cannot be performed which will straighten his eyes. But when a man is unduly biased in a given direction, men say, "Oh, if he was born so, he is not to blame." Not to blame? He is not to blame, if he cannot remedy it; but if he does not try to remedy it, he is to blame. Every man is to blame who has an evil passion which he could restrain but which he does not restrain. If a man would have the whole

of himself, and experience a happiness with which the ordinary happiness of men is not to be compared, he must obey all the great divinely ordained laws of life.

Now, as it is in such single instances, so it is all the way through life. There have been, in our history, not a few instances of apparent success in men who were flagrantly immoral. They came to great power and influence. They accumulated suddenly very large amounts of treasure. They had, such as it was, notoriety, which they called popularity. Living several years in a successful outward career, they destroyed the faith of hundreds and hundreds of young men, who said, referring to them, "Well, now, there is palpable evidence that a man does not need to be honest to succeed, and that a smart man does not need to consider any of these moral scruples." But I aver that in no instances where men have come to a success that ran through a series of years, have they come to it at the point where they disobeyed law. They came to it invariably at those points where they obeyed law. It was a success that followed obedience in the lower sphere where it had its roots; and when these men came to disaster, it was a disaster which resulted from their disobedience of the higher social and moral laws; and I will point you to the men who have prospered, being wicked, as authentic evidence of the truth of what I preach to you. They have their reward. They that sow to the flesh reap of the flesh; and those who sow to the spirit shall reap of the spirit. They that sow to the lower commercial life reap the rewards which belong to that lower life; but when by development a man comes up to where his head reaches the higher sphere of social life, of moral life, and of religious life, then he will perceive the real prosperity which he has gained by obedience to law. Then he will see the fruit of that nature which opens late, and which, without some higher food, will be impoverished and will starve. For prosperity that is based on virtue all round may come slow, but it will come to stay; and prosperity which comes by only a partial obedience to the lower spheres of natural law, and violates all the others, if it comes fast, does so because it is in a hurry to go. Righteousness *does* exalt a nation, and establish

the individual ; but unrighteousness is folly and miscalculation. What a man sows, that he reaps. He that sows to his lower life will reap all that that lower life has in it to give him—and that is not a great deal. He that sows to his higher life will reap that which will make him an honest, noble, rich-toned man.

Man is built kingdom over kingdom ; he is built for this world ; he is built for the world beyond ; he is built to take care of his bodily wants, and neighborhood wants, and society wants ; and then he is built for the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, and for the companionship of “the just made perfect.” He is born for life in the family, in the neighborhood, in the State, in the nation, in the world, in eternity ; and nobody is living wisely who does not look at his life, and say, “What are the laws, high and low,—bottom, intermediate and superior,—which God has enjoined upon me, and which, if I obey, yield me a reward ; so that, if I obey at the bottom, I get a reward there ; if I obey higher up, I get a reward from that point down ; and if I obey at the top, I get a reward from the top to the bottom ? Life becomes richer and is augmented if you build for the top ; but if you build for the bottom, and not for the top, life becomes poorer and poorer, and ends in eclipse and disaster.

Let no man, then, deceive you. Let no man suppose that he can sow to the flesh and reap of the spirit.

This leads me to consider the only other point which I shall make this morning—namely, that one of the most common things which we see in life is an attempt to cheat Providence and outwit God. Men, for instance, who are frivolous and giggling, think that if when they are under observation they are sober men, nobody will know them, and that so they will get the credit of sobriety. Men who in private indulge themselves in all manner of cheating, but who carry religious tracts in their hands above-board, think that they will be considered good, excellent, reliable Christian men. Men whose business calls them to counterfeiting, to forgery, to all manner of evil, sensuous, lustful courses, think that if they only wear robes of righteousness on Sunday, and appear



in church, and look devout, and talk the sounding phrases of religion, nobody will know it. In other words, men believe that it is possible for them, living in one sphere, to reap the reward of another sphere; living down there, to gather fruit up there; to be vicious, and wear the crown of virtue; to be corrupt, and have the remuneration of purity; to be deceitful and rotten, and to throw over their corruption so fair an exterior that they shall have that respect which is accorded to true and large men.

There is but one person deceived by adopting such a course as that, and that is the fool who does it. God is not cheated or deceived. What a man soweth, that shall he reap. If a man sows Canada thistles, he will reap Canada thistles; and the reaping is a very different thing from the sowing. The man who sows to appetite, though appetite be hedged in by double and triple walls, nature reveals it. He who lives for pride cannot hide pride. He who lives for craft has craft oozing out of him. He who lives for deceit and meanness, and is without natural affection, will sooner or later have God's sheriffs out after him. No man violates any of the great laws of conscience, rectitude or religion, in whom first or last it is not disclosed, and who first or last does not reap the fruit of the violation of those laws which he breaks and pretends to keep. You can circulate bogus among men, but not in the spiritual realm. No man can live on pretense, or anything but realities; and oftentimes so powerful are realities that though in one sphere a man may live on pretenses, and may be carried along a certain way, yet, after all, it is where he does obey, and where he is what he seems to be, that he has currency, in spite of those respects in which he is insincere and corrupt and rotten.

The word of God standeth sure. Truth vindicates itself. No man is so strong or so large that, first or last, things do not seem as they are in the sphere where he lives; and the art of putting false appearances upon things, of putting virtuous color on vicious courses, of putting pretensions of right character upon a bottomless gulf of ignominious selfishness and pride—this, from the day of Cataline to our day, has always been a delusion, and will never succeed, because

God is against it, and nature is against it, and time is against it, and all honest men are against it. First or last, God, nature, time and mankind will gain the victory, and lies shall be lies, and deceits shall be deceits, and rectitude shall be rectitude. "Patient continuance in well doing" does bring "glory, and honor, and immortality;" and they "that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness," shall inherit "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," every soul of them.

Therefore I say to you, my dearly beloved, believe that the truth is, after all, your best shield; believe that obedience is the best wisdom; believe that all tricks which involve specious pretenses, and all courses that involve not rectitude but appearances of rectitude, are full of damning retributions, and end in precipitous, abysmal horrors such as should warn every man. Seek truth. Seek virtue. Be patient therein. Believe that you are living in a multiplex sphere. Believe that it is not enough to obey laws which relate to the body, to society, to industry, to commerce, or to any of the professions. You must live with a knowledge that the laws which relate to you through time and through eternity are working together for your good, or that their penalties will run down on you for your harm. That is the reason why every man should take heed to the Word of God, and cleanse his way. And if the Word of God shines over all the spheres here and hereafter, above all it reveals this: that God never loses you out of the sight of his eye. More watchful than any mother for her babe, more watchful than any pilot at the wheel, more watchful than any sentinel that looks out at night for danger, the great eye of God watches you; and he that gives himself to God, and says, morning and night, "Thou God seest me; search me, O God, and try me; know me; see if there be any evil way in me"; he that lives as in the sight of God, will live perhaps slowly at first; but with accelerated step, surely, at last, and gloriously, he will unfold a grandeur, as the body decays, which will break out finally into the fullness of its light, when he stands in Zion and before God.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU art ever with us. Thou dost not need to be sought as if thou wert hidden in a secret place. Nor need we call out aloud to thee as if thou wert afar off. Our Father, thou dwellest where we dwell. We are enwrapped by thy thoughts. We move by thy propulsion. All life is of God, and all the springs of our life are of thee, and all that gives us our fullest manhood is breathed upon us from the divine presence. We rejoice that thou art so familiar with us, though we are not familiar with thee. We rejoice that it is not that which we return that brings forth continued blessings; for we are upon thine hands as little children upon the lap of the mother who loves from her own fullness, and not from the requital of the babe. Thou, out of thy bounty, out of thine ineffable and endless compassion and pity and love, dost pour forth upon us, not according to our asking, not according to our deserving, but according to our need, and according to the fullness of the divine supply.

O Lord our God, we desire to rise above the limitations of our own selfishness, and all those conditions on which men act. We desire to come into the consideration of thy nature, and the fullness and gloriousness of thine heart, so that we may know how ourselves to be more like thee, and, treading under foot pride and selfishness and all evil ways, to come by these to a better comprehension of the glory of God, the fullness of the Godhead, the amplitude of the divine life, and the richness of the thoughts that are in thee toward us afar off, spent with vain strivings, overthrown by the distemperature of our own passions, biased by the world, swayed to and fro incessantly, moaning as the trees moan under mighty winds, and yet, blessed be God, fast-rooted and immovable. We are held by thee; we are strengthened by thee; the sources of our life are impleated by thee; and we are yet destined, rising above the infirmity of this earthly estate, through discipline, through education thereby, by the might and by the power of thy Spirit, to yet stand in Zion and before God. Then we shall be able to discern by our spirits thy Spirit. Then we shall see thee no more through fables, or likenesses, or figures—through no mediums. We shall see thee as thou art, without need of interpretation. We shall rejoice in thy grandeur and glory. We shall rejoice in thee as our own possession. Thou wilt be ours, even as we are thine. And we shall move through the eternal spheres with companionship, and with an ampler and more and more glorious reciprocation of the divine nature. We shall come to that stature of intelligence and blessedness which it is not given us to understand in this mortal life.

Now we beseech of thee that, as watchers in the night wait for the morning, and rejoice long before the sun comes up in that the east is growing less dark, so we may wait and rejoice in the coming glory of the future. So, though we cannot know exactly what is the configuration of the other life, nor what are its experiences in detail, grant that the light and the glory of it, as of the coming sun,

may keep our face toward it evermore; that there we may rest in our fore-flying thoughts; that there we may find companionship; and that there we may revel in the anticipation of the companionship of the spirits of the just made perfect. May we rejoice in all those elements below which constitute the glory above; and we pray that we may less and less grieve for those who have gone before. Less and less may we return to our own sorrows.

O grant that we may think of the treasure, of the fullness, of the harmony, of the blessedness beyond conception of those who have escaped; of those who have gone early; of those who were a part of ourselves, and so have left us torn and mutilated; of those who have been to us upon earth more than ourselves, often our better spirits, our guides, our instructors, leaving us pale and feeble with almost nothing to lean upon: yet grant that we may overcome our own sorrow by the thought of the everlasting benediction that hath been pronounced upon them. May we cease to mourn, when we behold others who have set their helm for heaven, and are steering thitherward, and are as men going down upon the horizon in the sea—lost to us, but gained to the heavenly estate. And may we cease to mourn over those signs and tokens of our own departure which come—the weakness; the taking-away of the mortal sense; the premonitions that are sent beforehand merely to tell us how near we are coming. For as we leave the world, with its strength or weakness, we measure how near we are to the life that is to come; and for that sake may we be willing to give up everything that is hitherward, knowing that the joy which lies before us is in overmeasure, and that the sorrows of this present state are not worthy to be compared with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which is in reserve for us. May we, therefore, go forward through our youth toward old age gladly. May we go seeking immortality. May we lift up hands of rejoicing yearningly, and cry out for the consummation. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and may we cheer each other on the way by words of courage and by words of rejoicing. May we not be as those who are bowed down, carrying the yoke and the heavy burden. We are not thy slaves. Grant, we pray thee, that we may make proof before men that the Lord's burden is light, and that the Lord's yoke is easy, and that we have thine own strength ministered to us. Grant that we may so live before the world that they shall long to discover the sources of our life, so full of gladness and joy and victory, and of anticipations of yet more blessed victories to come.

We pray for those who would fain enter upon this life, but feel how weak they are; for those who have taken but a few staggering steps; for those who are tempted; for those whose way and work in life are to overcome easily besetting sins; for those who are conscious of their frivolity; for those who know their instability; for those who are so easily swept one way or the other by the breath of men; for those who mourn that they are so sensitive to men's thoughts, and so insensitive to the thoughts of God; for those who are laboring with fear; for those who are burdened with conscience; for those who seem to themselves utterly unable to look



up; for those who are bowed down with cares; for those who are in distressing conflicts, and know not the way out of their difficulties; for those who suffer through the troubles that come upon others. Look upon the great caravan of pilgrims who move toward thee, O thou Comforter of the ages! and have compassion upon each one. Yea, give to every one God's blessing according to his several need—the consciousness that God is thinking of him, and is merciful, and waits to be gracious toward him.

We beseech of thee thus that they may not stand in the consciousness of their own goodness, and strength, and wisdom, and purity, and power, but that they may stand in the faith of the power, and wisdom, and goodness, and purity of what thou art toward them; in the consciousness of thy kindness toward them because they are so weak; of thy grace and mercy toward them because they are so sinful, and need so much. For there is no heart that beats like thine. There is no heart that could take care of this globe but thine. O thou that art ascended from crucifixion to imperial power; thou that hast borne the sins of the world, and art bearing them—thou art a fit Leader, appointed to lead such as we are from step to step, and from strength to strength, until we stand in Zion and before God.

And now we pray that thou wilt grant to every one more patience, more faith, more courage, more hope, more joy. We beseech thee to bless all the labors of thy servants in their households, and in their several occupations in life. Deliver them from the temptations which are incident to each place where duty calls them.

We pray that thou wilt be with those that go forth to give light and instruction to their brethren who are less fortunate than they.

Bless all our schools and missions. Bless all the teachers, and superintendents, and officers, and scholars. Bless the households to which they belong.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the churches that are round about us in this great city. Unite them by inward sympathy, and by a common love of the common Saviour in a common work in behalf of a dark and wicked world.

We pray that thy kingdom may come everywhere. We pray that nations may be Christian, and that national policy may throw off oppression and be just. We pray that strength may know itself to be ordained for the defense of weakness. May avarice and cruelty be rebuked in high places. May the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and may he reign from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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